

decommissioning issue that has to be addressed and has to be resolved. Senator Mitchell did a very good job, I thought, of dealing with that whole issue. But if you look at the other—the sort of governance questions, the questions about how the people in Northern Ireland will live, how do you assure that everybody will be treated with dignity, that everybody will be treated fairly, that everybody will have their say, those issues, it seems to me, can be resolved.

There is nothing to be lost here by taking a leap of faith. You know, everybody can always go back to behaving in the terrible way they once behaved. I mean, you know, there's nothing—that's true, by the way, of every human being in the world—every time somebody decides to try to make a change in his or her life, one of the things you always know is, if the change fails, you can always go back to doing what you were doing. If it's ultimately unsatisfying, if it leads to a dead end what is to be lost in trying? Nothing, nothing.

That's the argument I make: It's in everyone's self-interest to go forward. It is in no one's self-interest to keep their foot on the brakes of this process.

**Q.** At what level, Mr. President, is your administration in contact with Sinn Fein or the IRA?

**President Clinton.** I think the only thing that's appropriate for me to say to you, sir, is that we have worked hard over this entire process to maintain what we thought was an appropriate level of communication with the parties involved. And that's all I think I should say about it.

**Q.** Do you feel that the administration's allowing Gerry Adams to enter this country at this time has been beneficial for the peace process?

**President Clinton.** Yes. If I didn't think so, I wouldn't have done it.

**Q.** Thank you.

**President Clinton.** Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:47 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Finola Bruton, wife of Prime Minister Bruton; former Senator George J. Mitchell, Special Assistant to the President for Northern Ireland; Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom; and Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams.

This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

## Remarks at a Reception Celebrating Saint Patrick's Day

March 15, 1996

**The President.** Thank you very much. And welcome to the White House. Happy Saint Patrick's Day. To the Taoiseach and Mrs. Bruton and all of our friends from Ireland and my fellow Americans, we are delighted to have you here with us again. To our friends from Northern Ireland, party leaders John Hume, David Trimble, John Alderdice; the Lord Mayor of Londonderry, John Kerr, thank you for traveling all this way to be part of this celebration.

To Senator Mitchell and Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith, and to all the Irish-Americans here who have played a special role in strengthening the bonds between our peoples, let me say to you a very special thank you and urge you to redouble your efforts in the days and months ahead.

I want to say a special word of appreciation, too, to the Irish-American members of our administration, our Secretary of Education Richard Riley; the Director of the Peace Corps, Mark Gearan. And General McCaffrey is here; I take it he's elevating his Irish roots today, our new drug czar. And since our trip to Ireland, the Secretary of Commerce, Ron Brown, has asked for honorary designation—[laughter]—leaving himself open to all sorts of unusual historical analogies. [Laughter]

I want to say to all of you it's no secret that Hillary and I love this time of year. This day got off to a very promising start; the Taoiseach gave me a bowl of shamrocks. It had two benefits. First of all, this being an election year, I need all the shamrocks I can get. [Laughter] And secondly, this is the one day of the year when I am more green than the Vice President. [Laughter]

When Hillary and I came home from Ireland, I told her that I didn't know whether I would ever have 2 such days like that again in this lifetime, but if I didn't, I couldn't imagine two better ones anyway. I will never forget the waving sea of Irish and American flags at College Green in Dublin, never for-

get the relatives I met at the pub in Dublin. [Laughter] I've gotten used to meeting unexpected relatives in this job and—[laughter]—it was nice to meet some I was genuinely glad to see.

We can't wait to return President Robinson's hospitality when she comes to Washington in June. And we think that today we ought to take just a moment once again to celebrate the ties that bind us together.

In countless ways, Irish-Americans have helped to form the core of the American identity, proving that our diversity is our strength and reminding us that becoming an American does not mean forgetting your roots. Now all Americans of Irish heritage have a great responsibility, for in the land of our ancestors, the future is at a crossroads, and each of us must do our part to safeguard the promise of peace.

Over the last year, all of us who care about peace in Northern Ireland have shared some dramatic highs and lows. For us here in America it has been an emotional roller coaster. For us here in Washington it has as well. And I would be remiss if I didn't say a special word of thanks to the bipartisan congressional delegation of Irish-Americans who have supported the efforts of this administration to forward the cause of peace in Ireland.

Many of them went with the First Lady and me to Ireland, where we shared the crowds in Belfast and Derry, the courage of young Catherine Hamill and David Sterrit as they joined hands to tell the world what peace meant to them. And we were all saddened and outraged by the bombs in London that killed innocent people and threatened the peace on which so many hopes are riding.

Now, more than ever, we have to support the people of Northern Ireland who have made already and clearly the choice for peace, for dialog over division and for hope over fear. The enemies of peace have fallen back on the bullet and the bomb, but we must go forward.

Over the last 3 years I have made an honest effort to listen to all sides of this story, and I have come to the conclusion that in Northern Ireland, as I have seen in the Middle East and Bosnia, in so many places around the world, the deepest divide is not

between those with opposing backgrounds or faiths or even opposing views. Instead it is between those who are willing to find a way to reconcile their differences in peace and those who still wish to clench their fists, those who look to the future and those who are trapped in the past.

Will we teach our children to define themselves in terms of what they are for or what they are against? Will we teach them to define themselves in terms of what they can become or the limits that have been put on them by their shared pasts, to be proud of who they are or to look down on those who are different from them? These are the decisions that face people all over the world, and they face the people of Northern Ireland.

I know and you know, everyone who saw the faces and heard the shouts of the people in the Shankill and the Falls know that the people of Northern Ireland had chosen peace. And America must support them until they find that peace. And so, on behalf of the United States, that is the commitment I make again today to the Taoiseach and the people of Northern Ireland and to the Prime Minister and the British Government.

The February 28th announcement by the Irish and the British Governments is truly a milestone achievement, and we strongly support setting a firm date for all-party talks. Violence has no place. The cease-fire must be restored. That is the only way these talks can be inclusive, the only way they can be all-party talks.

We Americans who proudly call ourselves Irish must speak with one voice on this issue. We must stand with those who long for lasting peace. We must stand with those who have broken with the past and who are working for a better future for their children.

And so on this Saint Patrick's Day, I ask Irish-Americans of all traditions to remember the spirit of the saint whose faith triumphed over violence and suspicion and to join me in a moment of silence and rededication for the peace in Northern Ireland.

Thank you very much. Happy Saint Patrick's Day. God bless you all, and please welcome the Prime Minister.

[At this point, Prime Minister Bruton made remarks.]

**President Clinton.** Before we go down to the receiving line, I want to say something to you. Our piper, Mr. Blair, and his wife prepared the song that we marched down the stairs to. It's called "Ireland at Peace." And they did it in a way, fulfilling the responsibility that each American has, of Irish heritage, to support that. I thought it was a remarkable thing that he and his wife did. It was a lovely melody. You heard it when we came down the stairs. And I'd like for you to give him a hand. [Applause]

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mary Robinson of Ireland. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

### **Executive Order 12992—President's Council on Counter-Narcotics**

*March 15, 1996*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, it is hereby ordered as follows:

**Section 1. Establishment.** There is established the President's Council on Counter-Narcotics ("Council").

**Sec. 2. Membership.** The Council shall comprise the:

- (a) President, who shall serve as Chairman of the Council;
- (b) Vice President;
- (c) Secretary of State;
- (d) Secretary of the Treasury;
- (e) Secretary of Defense;
- (f) Attorney General;
- (g) Secretary of Transportation;
- (h) Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations;
- (i) Director of the Office of Management and Budget;
- (j) Chief of Staff to the President;
- (k) Director of National Drug Control Policy;
- (l) Director of Central Intelligence;
- (m) Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs;
- (n) Counsel to the President;

- (o) Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and
- (p) National Security Advisor for the Vice President.

As applicable, the Council shall also comprise the Secretary of Health and Human Services; the Secretary of Education; and the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy and such other officials of the departments and agencies as the President may, from time to time, designate.

**Sec. 3. Meetings of the Council.** The President, or upon his direction, the Vice President, may convene meetings of the Council. The President shall preside over meetings of the Council, provided that in his absence, the Vice President will preside. The Council will meet at least quarterly.

**Sec. 4. Functions.** (a) The functions of the Council are to advise and assist the President in: (1) providing direction and oversight for the national drug control strategy, including relating drug control policy to other national security interests and establishing priorities; and (2) ensuring coordination among departments and agencies concerning implementation of the President's national drug control strategy.

(b) The Director of National Drug Control Policy will continue to be the senior drug control policy official in the executive branch and the President's chief drug control policy spokesman.

(c) In matters affecting national security interests, the Director of National Drug Control Policy shall work in conjunction with the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

**Sec. 5. Administration.** (a) The Council may utilize established or ad hoc committees, task forces, or interagency groups chaired by the Director of National Drug Control Policy or his representative, in carrying out its functions under this order.

(b) The staff of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, in coordination with the staffs of the Vice President and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, shall act as staff for the Council.

(c) All executive departments and agencies shall cooperate with the Council and provide such assistance, information, and advice as